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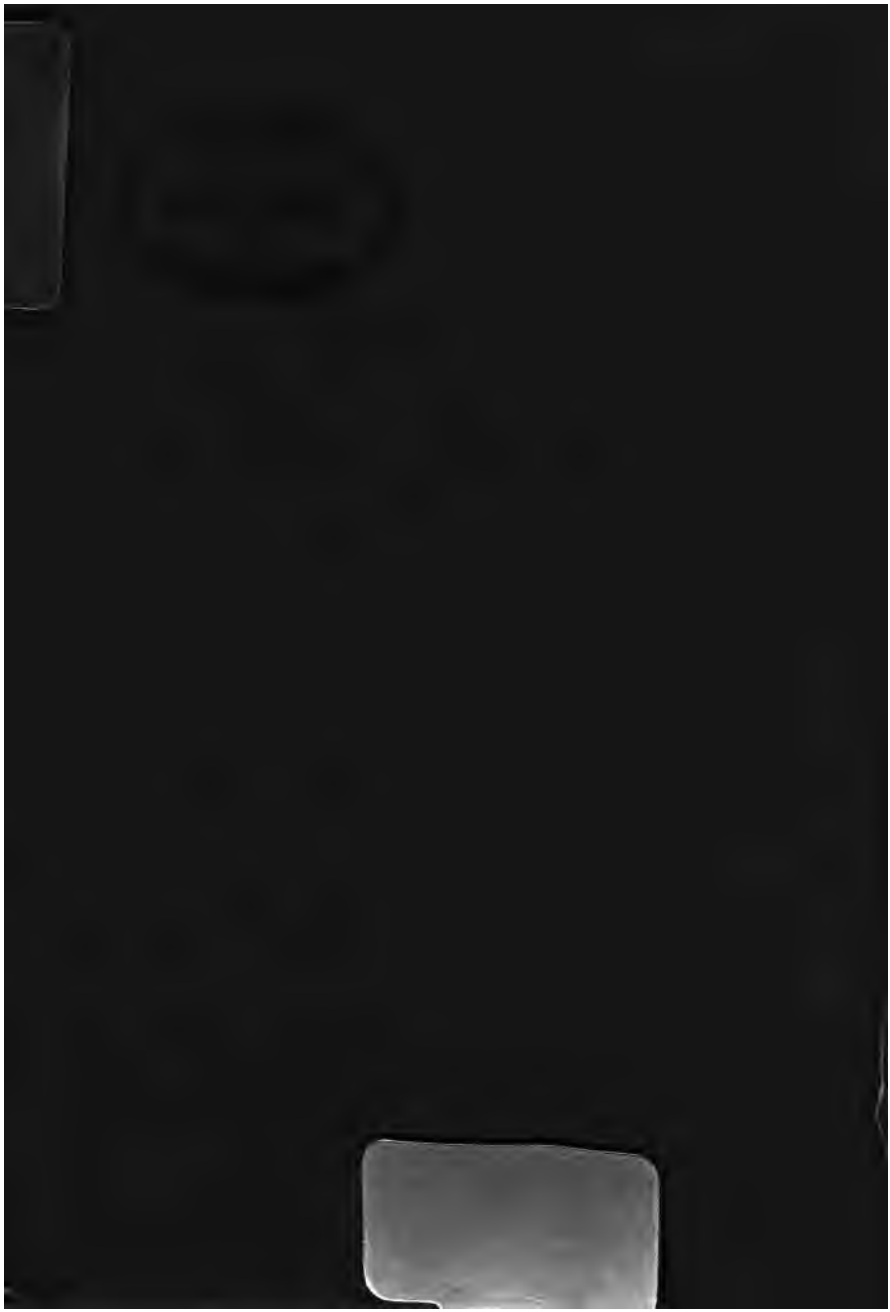
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A. Bronson Alcott

Sonnets and Canzonets





To Edith
From
Mama.

Xmas 1891.

SONNETS

AND

CANZONETS.

BY

A. BRONSON ALCOTT.

"LOVE CAN SUN THE REALMS OF LIGHT."

Schiller.

BOSTON:
ROBERTS BROTHERS.
1882.

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TO

A. BRONSON ALCOTT,

UPON READING HIS OCTOGENARIAN POEMS.

THE period to which the scholar of two and eighty years belongs, is seldom that of his youngest readers: it is more likely to be the epoch of his own golden youth, when his masters were before his eyes, and his companions were the books and the friends of his heart. Thus the aged Landor could not bring his thoughts down from the grand forms of Greek and Roman literature to which they were early accustomed; he had swerved now and then from that loyalty in middle life, impressed and acted upon as he was by the great political events of the Napoleonic

era, — but he returned to the epigram and the idyl in the "white winter of his age," and the voices of the present and of the future appealed to him in vain. In the old Goethe there was something more prophetic and august; he came nearer to his contemporaries, and prepared the way for a recognition of his greatness by the generation which saw the grave close over him. In this, that strange but loyal disciple of his, the Scotch Carlyle, rendered matchless service to his master; yet he, too, in his unhappy old age, could only at intervals, and by gleams of inspiration, — as at the Edinburgh University Festival, — come into communication with the young spirits about him. To you, dear Friend and Master, belongs the rare good fortune (good genius rather) that has brought you in these late days, into closer fellowship than of yore with the active and forth-looking spirit of the time. In youth and middle life you were in advance of your period, which

has only now overtaken you when it must, by the ordinance of Nature, so soon bid you farewell, as you go forward to new prospects, in fairer worlds than ours.

It is this union of youth and age, of the past and the present — yes, and the future also — that I have admired in these artless poems, over which we have spent together so many agreeable hours. Fallen upon an age in literature when the poetic form is everywhere found, but the discerning and inventive spirit of Poesy seems almost lost, I have marked with delight in these octogenarian verses, flowing so naturally from your pen, the very contradiction of this poetic custom of the period. Your want of familiarity with the accustomed movement of verse in our time, brings into more distinct notice the genuine poetical motions of your genius. Having been admitted to the laboratory, and privileged to witness the action and reaction of your thought, as it crystal-

lized into song, I perceived, for the first time, how high sentiment, by which you have from youth been inspired, may become the habitual movement of the mind, at an age when so many, if they live at all in spirit, are but nursing the selfish and distorted fancies of morose singularity. To you the world has been a brotherhood of noble souls, — too few, as we thought, for your companionship, — but which you have enlarged by the admission to one rank of those who have gone, and of us who remain to love you and listen to your oracles. The men and the charming women who recognized your voice when it was that of one crying in the wilderness — "Prepare ye the way of our Lord," are joined, in your commemorative sonnets, with those who hearken to its later accents, proclaiming the same acceptable year of the Lord.

It is the privilege of poets — immemorial and native to the clan — that they should share the

immortality they confer. This right you may vindicate for your own. The honors you pay, in resounding verse, to Channing, to Emerson, to Margaret Fuller, to Hawthorne, Thoreau, and the rest of the company with whom you trod these groves, and honored these altars of the Spirit unnamed, return in their echoes to yourself. They had their special genius, and you yours no less, though it found not the same expression with theirs. We please our love with the thought that, in these sonnets and canzonets of affection, you have celebrated yourself with them; that the swift insight, the ennobling passion for truth and virtue, the high resolve, the austere self-sacrifice, the gentle submission to a will eternally right, in which these friends, so variously gifted, found a common tie, — all these are yours also, — and may they be ours! The monuments and trophies of genius are perishable, but the soul's impression abides forever, *forma mentis æterna*. To that imperish-

able, ever-beauteous, self-renouncing, loyal, and steadfast Spirit of the Universe which we learned to worship in our youth, and which has never forsaken our age and bereavement, may these offerings, and all that we are, be consecrated now and forever!

F. B. SANBORN.

CONCORD, January 1, 1882.

AN ESSAY

ON THE

SONNET AND THE CANZONET.



THE

SONNET AND THE CANZONET.

"SCORN not the sonnet," said Wordsworth, and then gave us at least fifty noble reasons why we should not, — for so many at least of his innumerable sonnets are above languor and indifference, and all of them above contempt. Milton was more self-restrained than Wordsworth, and wrote fewer sonnets, every one of which is a treasure, either for beauty of verse, nobility of thought, happy portraiture of persons, or quaint and savage humor, — like that on "Tetrachordon," and the elongated sonnet in which

he denounces the Presbyterians, and tells them to their face, "New Presbyter is but old Priest writ large." Shakespeare unlocked his heart with sonnets in another key than Milton's, — less conformed to the model of the Italian sonnet, but more in keeping with English verse, of which Shakespeare had the entire range. His sonnets are but quatrains following each other by threes, with a resounding couplet binding them together in one sheaf, and his example has made this form of the sonnet legitimate for all who write English verse, — no matter what the studious or the pedantic may say. Surrey also, who first used the sonnet in English, wrote it in this free manner of Shakespeare, as well as in the somewhat stricter form that Sidney employed, and it is only of late years that they have tried to shut us up to one definite and unchanging sequence and interplay of rhyme. Mr. Alcott in these new sonnets, the ripe fruit of an aged tree, has used

the freedom that nature gave him, and years allow: he has written with little uniformity in the order and number of his rhymes, but with much regard to the spirit of the sonnet as a high form of verse. I fancy that Dante (who may be called the father of the sonnet, though not the first to write it) chose this graceful and courteous verse, because it is so well suited to themes of love and friendship. When he would express sorrow or anger, or light and jesting humor, he had recourse to the canzonet, the *terza rima*, or what he called the ballad, — something quite unlike what we know by that name. Mr. Alcott has followed in the same general course; his sonnets are one thing, his canzonets another: though the difference in feeling, which prompts him to use one form rather than the other, cannot always be definitely expressed. It is felt rather than seen, and seen rather by the effect of the finished poem than by the light of any rule or formal definition.

Definiteness, in fact, must not be looked for in these poems; nor is it the characteristic of the highest poetry in any language. Verse may be powerful and suggestive, or even clear in the sense of producing a distinct impression on the mind, without being definite, and responding to all the claims of analysis. I take it that few readers will fail to see the central thought, or the vivid portraiture in each of these sonnets and canzonets; but fewer still will be able to explain precisely, even to their own minds, what each suggestive phrase and period includes and excludes in its meaning. For this fine vagueness of utterance, the sonnet has always given poets a fair field, and our present author has not gone beyond his due privilege in this respect, though he has availed himself of it more frequently than many would have done. The mottoes and citations accompanying each sonnet may help the reader to a meaning that does not at once flash in his eyes. But he must not expect to con-

quer these verses at a single reading. The thought of years, the labor of months, has been given to the writing of them; and the reader ought not to complain if he take as much time to comprehend them as the author took to write them. They are worth the pains of reading many times over, and even of learning them by heart, for which their compendious form well fits them.

It may be complained that these sonnets lack variety. This is indeed a fault into which sonneteers often fall, — our best collection of American sonnets hitherto — those of Jones Very — being open to this censure. It will be found, perhaps, that the sameness of rhyme and thought is often but an appearance, — the delicate shade of meaning being expressed, in a vocabulary of no large extent, by a rare process of combining and collocating words. Certain phrases recur, too, because the thought necessarily recurs, — as when the oratory of Phillips and of Parker, as of others, is character-

ized by the general term, *eloquence.* In the poverty of our language, there is no other term to use, while the qualifying words and their connection sufficiently distinguish between one person and another. The critical are referred to Homer, who never fails to repeat the same word, or the same verse, when it comes in his way to do so.

But to return to the sonnet itself. Landor, to whom as to Thoreau, Milton was the greatest English poet, thought that the blind Puritan had made good his offence against the Psalms of David, by the sonnet on the slaughtered saints of Piedmont. "Milton," he says, "was never half so wicked a regicide as when he lifted up his hand and smote King David. He has atoned for it, however, by composing a magnificent psalm of his own, in the form of a sonnet. There are others in Milton comparable to it, but none elsewhere." And then the wilful critic goes on to say, putting his words into the mouth of Porson: "In the poems of Shake-

speare, which are printed as sonnets, there is sometimes a singular strength and intensity of thought, with little of that imagination which was afterward to raise him highest in the universe of poetry. Even the interest we take in the private life of this miraculous man, cannot keep the volume in our hands long together. We acknowledge great power, but we experience great weariness. Were I a poet, I would much rather have written the 'Allegro,' or the 'Penseroso' than all those." Monstrous as this comment seems to us, there is a certain truth in it, the sonnet in large quantities always producing weariness; for which reason, as I suppose, Dante interspersed his love sonnets in the "Vita Nuova" and the "Convito," with canzonets and ballads. His commentaries — often of a singular eloquence — also serve as a relief to the formal verse, as his melodious Tuscan lines do to the formality of his poetical metaphysics. A person, says Landor, "lately tried to persuade me that he is never so

highly poetical, as when he is deeply metaphysical. He then quoted fourteen German poets of the first order, and expressed his compassion for Æschylus and Homer." Dante's metaphysics were of a higher cast, and so interfused with love and fair ladies, that they only weary us with a certain perplexity as to where are the limits of courtship and of logic. Mr. Alcott also is quaintly metaphysical in Dante's fashion; like the sad old Florentine, but with a more cheerful spirit, he addresses himself

"To every captive soul and gentle heart,"
(A ciascun alma presa e gentil core,)

and would fain inquire of those who go on a pilgrimage of Love (O voi che per la via d' Amor passate) and of the fair ladies who have learned love at first hand (Donne che avete intelletto d' amore). His doctrine is that of the wise man whom Dante quotes and approves in the "Vita Nuova," —

"One and the same are love and the gentle heart."
(Amor e' l cor gentil sono una cosa.)

Other Americans have written sonnets in this ancient faith, — as he, who thus (in that happy season so aptly described by Mr. Alcott, as

"Youth's glad morning when the rising East
Glows golden with assurance of success,
And life itself's a rare continual feast,
Enjoyed the more if meditated less,")

addressed his own *cor gentil:* —

"My heart, forthlooking in the purple day,
Tell me what sweetest image thou may'st see,
Fit to be type of thy dear love and thee?
Lo! here where sunshine keeps the wind away,
Grow two young violets, — humble lovers they, —
With drooping face to face, and breath to breath,
They look and kiss and love and laugh at death: —
Yon bluebird singing on the scarlet spray

Of the bloomed maple in the blithe spring air,
While his mate answers from the wood of pines,
And all day long their music ne'er declines;
For love their labor is, and love their care.
'These pass with day and spring;' the true heart saith,—
'Forever thou wilt love, and she be fair.'"

In the same Italian vein, another and better poet, but with less warmth, touches the same theme, —

"Thou art like that which is most sweet and fair,
A gentle morning in the youth of spring,
When the few early birds begin to sing
Within the delicate depths of the fine air.
Yet shouldst thou these dear beauties much impair,
Since thou art better than is everything
Which or the woods or skies or green fields bring,
And finer thoughts hast thou than they can wear.
In the proud sweetness of thy grace I see
What lies within, — a pure and steadfast mind,
Which its own mistress is of sanctity,

And to all gentleness hath been refined.
So that thy least breath falleth upon me
As the soft breathing of midsummer wind."

In the changes of time and the fitful mood of the poet, sadness succeeds to this assured joy, and he sings, —

"The day has past, I never may return;
Twelve circling years have run since first I came
And kindled the pure truth of friendship's flame;
Alone remain these ashes in the urn —
Vainly for light the taper may I turn, —
Thy hand is closed, as for these years, the same,
And for the substance naught is but the name.
No more a hope, no more a ray to burn.
But once more in the pauses of thy joy,
Remember him who sought thee in his youth,
And with the old reliance of the boy
Asked for thy treasures in the guise of truth."

Here is another voice, chanting in another strain, —

"Thy beauty fades, and with it, too, my love,
For 'twas the selfsame stalk that bore the flower;
Soft fell the rain, and, breaking from above,
The sun looked out upon our nuptial hour;
And I had thought forever by thy side
With bursting buds of hope in youth to dwell;
But one by one Time strewed thy petals wide,
And every hope's wan look a grief can tell;
For I had thoughtless lived beneath his sway,
Who like a tyrant dealeth with us all, —
Crowning each rose, though rooted in decay,
With charms that shall the spirit's love enthral,
And, for a season, turn the soul's pure eyes
From virtue's bloom that time and death defies."

Out of this valley of sadness the spirit rises on bolder wing, as the melancholy mood passes away, —

"Hearts of eternity, hearts of the deep!
Proclaim from land to sea your mighty fate;
How that for you no living comes too late,

How ye cannot in Theban labyrinth creep,
How ye great harvests from small surface reap,
Shout, excellent band, in grand primeval strain,
Like midnight winds that foam along the main,—
And do all things rather than pause to weep.
A human heart knows naught of littleness,
Suspects no man, compares with no one's ways,
Hath in one hour most glorious length of days,
A recompense, a joy, a loveliness;
Like eaglet keen, shoots into azure far,
And always dwelling nigh is the remotest star."

Here, as Landor said, "is a sonnet, and the sonnet admits not that approach to the prosaic which is allowable in the ballad." For this reason Mr. Alcott, who began his poetical autobiography, when he was eighty years old, in a ballad measure, has now passed into the majesty of the sonnet, as he has come to those passages of life which will not admit prosaic treatment. Moderately used, and not worked to death, as

Wordsworth employed it, the sonnet is a great uplifter of poesy. It calls to the reader, as the early Christian litanies did to the worshipper, *Sursum corda*, Raise your thoughts! The canzonet lets us down again into the pathetic, the humorous, or the fanciful, — though in this volume the canzonet generally betokens sadness. It may easily become an ode, as in the verses on Garfield: indeed the ode may be considered as an extended canzonet, or the canzonet as a brief ode. It is the sonnet that chiefly concerns us now, and that form of the sonnet which deals with love; since the germ of this book was a romance of love, seeking to express itself in the uplifting strain and tender cadence of successive sonnets; which lead us though green pastures and beside the still waters, and then to the shore of the resounding sea, — itself worthy of a sonnet which I have somewhere heard: —

"Ah mournful Sea! Yet to our eyes he wore
The placid look of some great god at rest;
With azure arms he clasped the embracing shore,
While gently heaved the billows of his breast;
We scarce his voice could hear, and then it seemed
The happy murmur of a lover true,
Who, in the sweetness of his sleep, hath dreamed
Of kisses falling on his lips like dew.
Far off, the blue and gleaming hills above,
The Sun looked through his veil of thinnest haze,
As coy Diana, blushing at her love,
Half hid with her own light her earnest gaze,
When on the shady Latmian slope she found
Fair-haired Endymion slumbering on the ground."

This is one picture in the kaleidoscope of Aphrodite, who was a sea-born goddess, and partial to her native element. Yet it is not through the eye alone that she ensnares us, but with the music of birds, — and in poetry her own darling bird is not the dove, but the nightingale, — a stranger to our

orchards and forests, but familiar to the groves of the Muse. A poet, by no means happy in his love in after years, thus saluted this bird, with music as sweet as her own, —

"O Nightingale, that on yon bloomy spray,
Warblest at eve, when all the woods are still,
Thou with fresh hope the lover's heart doth fill,
While the jolly Hours lead on propitious May.
Thy liquid notes, that close the eye of day,
First heard before the shallow cuckoo's bill,
Portend success in love; O, if Jove's will
Have linked that amorous power to thy soft lay,
Now timely sing, ere the rude bird of hate
Foretell my hopeless doom in some grove nigh;
As thou from year to year hast sung too late
For my relief, yet hadst no reason why;
Whether the Muse, or Love call thee his mate,
Both them I serve, and of their train am I."

This is plainly a fabricated song, not poured out from the heart, though full of melodious fancy.

More natural and earnest is the tone in which our poet soon after praises one who had passed unheeding by the bower of love, and devoted herself to a life of piety and good deeds. We cannot guess who she was, but such saints are seen in every land and age.

"Lady, that in the prime of earliest youth
Wisely hast shunned the broad way and the green,
And with those few art eminently seen
That labor up the hill of heavenly truth, —
The better part with Mary and with Ruth,
Chosen thou hast; and they that overween,
And at thy growing virtues fret their spleen,
No anger find in thee, but pity and ruth.
Thy care is fixed, and zealously attends
To fill thy odorous lamp with deeds of light,
And hope that reaps not shame. Therefore be sure
Thou, when the bridegroom with his feastful friends
Passes to bliss at the mid hour of night,
Hast gained thy entrance, virginwise and pure."

. It is a truth for the initiated that love begins with worship, and favors piety in its first approaches; and we need not wonder if the devout poet in due time paid his amorous addresses to this bride of the Spirit, whose lamp must have been dim, indeed, if it did not reveal to her the lover in disguise of the brother in Israel. A poet of our day, in a sonnet somewhat faulty in form, but true to the faith of your pilgrim-vow, ye happy palmers of Love, —

"O voi che per la via d' Amor passate!"

has written as follows: —

"'As calmest waters mirror Heaven the best,
So best befit remembrances of thee
Calm holy hours from earthly passion free,
Sweet twilight musing, — Sabbaths in the breast.
No stooping thought, nor any grovelling care,
The sacred whiteness of that place shall stain,
Where, far from heartless joys and rites profane,
Memory has reared to thee an altar fair.

Yet frequent visitors shall kiss the shrine,
And ever keep its vestal lamp alight;
All noble thoughts, all dreams divinely bright,
That waken or delight this soul of mine.'
So Love, meek pilgrim! his young vows did pay,
With glowing eyes that must his lips gainsay."

A higher gospel is preached in the sonnet of another American poet, who has written too few verses, — or rather has published too few of the many he has composed.

"As unto blooming roses, summer dews,
Or morning's amber to the tree-top choirs,
So to my bosom are the beams that use
To rain on me from eyes that Love inspires;
Your love, — vouchsafe it, royal-hearted Few, —
And I will set no common price thereon;
O, I will keep, as Heaven his holy blue,
Or Night her diamonds, that dear treasure won.
But aught of inward faith must I forego,
Or miss one drop from Truth's baptismal hand,

Think poorer thoughts, pray cheaper prayers, and grow
Less worthy trust, to meet your hearts' demand:
Farewell! your wish I for your sake deny;
Rebel to love in truth to love am I."

A poet who has been more than once quoted in this essay, saw no sharp hostility between Love and Death, — those reputed foes, — but thus addressed the last earthly benefactor of mankind: —

"O Death! thou art the palace of our hopes,
The storehouse of our joys, — great labor's end."

His friend, confronting the same inevitable guest, questioned the dark angel, in these lines, that conform to the rule of the sonnet in spirit, if not in rhyme: —

"What strange deep secret dost thou hold, O Death!
To hallow those thou claimest for thine own?
That which the open book could never teach,
The closed one whispers, as we stand alone

By one, how more alone than we! — and strive
To comprehend the passion of that peace.
In vain our thoughts would wind within the heart,
The heart of this great mystery of release! —
Baptism of Death — which steepest infant eyes
In grace of calm that saints might hope to wear,
Whose cold touch purifies the guilty brow,
And sets again the seal of childhood there —
Our line of life in vain would sound thy sea,
That which we seek to know, — we soon shall be."

Let me now close this garland of sonnets with two choice flowers from that garden of Elizabeth which no modern botanist and no anthologist of ancient fame can equal in fragrance and amaranthine beauty. Both breathe the sweetness of Love, — the first, from the "Parthenophe and Parthenophil" of Barnaby Barnes, with some flavor of discontent, — but the second, taken from the warm hand of Shakespeare, is full of that noble confidence, which he, of all poets, most naturally inspires.

"Ah, sweet Content! where is thy mild abode?
Is it with shepherds and light-hearted swains,
Which sing upon the downs and pipe abroad,
Tending their flocks and cattle on the plains?
Ah, sweet Content! where dost thou safely rest?
In heaven? with angels which the praises sing
Of Him that made and rules at his behest
The minds and hearts of every living thing?
Ah, sweet Content! where does thy harbor hold?
Is it in churches with religious men,
Which please the gods with prayers manifold,
And in their studies meditate it then?
Whether thou dost on heaven or earth appear,
Be where thou wilt, thou wilt not harbor here."

And now upon this delicious disconsolate strophe, hear the brave turn and reply of Shakespeare's antistrophe, — and take it for your consolation, lovers and poets! —

"Not mine own fears, nor the prophetic soul
Of the wide world, dreaming on things to come,

Can yet the lease of my true love control,
Supposed as forfeit to a cónfined doom.
The mortal moon hath her eclipse endured,
And the sad augurs mock their own presage;
Incertainties now crown themselves assured,
And peace proclaims olives of endless age.
Now with the drops of this most balmy time
My love looks fresh, and Death to me subscribes,
Since, spite of him, I'll live in this poor rhyme,
While he insults o'er dull and speechless tribes:
And thou in this shalt find thy monument,
When tyrants' crests and tombs of brass are spent."

F. B. S.

FEBRUARY 6, 1882.

SONNETS AND CANZONETS.

"These quiet and green places, these mountains and valleys, were created by Nature on purpose for loving hearts."

MELI'S CANZONETS.

"Be it that my unseasonable song
Come out of time, that fault is in the time;
And I must not do Virtue so much wrong,
As love her aught the worse for others' crime;
And yet I find some blessed spirits among
That cherish me, and like and grace my rhyme."

DANIEL.

PROEM.

LONG left unwounded by the grisly foe,
Who sometime pierces all with fatal shaft,
Still on my cheek fresh youth did lively glow,
And at his threatening arrow gaily laught;
Came then my friendly scholar, and we quaffed
From learning's spring, its sparkling overflow;
All through the lingering evening's charmèd hours,
Delightful fellowship in thought was ours:
If I from Poesy could not all abstain,
He my poor verses oft did quite undress,
New wrapt in words my thought's veiled naked-
ness,
Or kindly clipt my steed's luxuriant mane:
'T was my delight his searching eye to meet,
In days of genial versing, memories sweet.

JANUARY 1, 1882.

PART I.

"O Spring, thou youthful beauty of the year,
Mother of flowers, bringer of warbling quires,
Of all sweet new green things, and new desires."

GUARINI'S PASTOR FIDO.

I.

AUSPICIOUS morn, com'st opportune, unbought?
Bring'st thou glad furtherance in thy rosy train?
Speed then, my chariot, following fast my thought,
And distance on thy track the lumbering wain,
O'er plain and hillock nearing her abode,
The goal of expectation, fortune's road,—
The maiden waits to greet with courtesy
Her bashful guest, while stranger yet is he:
From friendly circle at the city's Court
She 's come to cull the flowers, to toy and play
With prattling childhood, love's delightful sport;
Its smile call forth, to scent the new-mown hay,
Enjoy the wholesome laughter, simple mien,
Of country people in this rural scene.

"So sweetly she bade me adieu,

I thought that she bade me return."

SHENSTONE.

II.

AH! why so brief the visit, short his stay?
The acquaintance so surprising, and so sweet,
Stolen is my heart, 't is journeying far away,
With that shy stranger whom my voice did greet.
That hour so fertile of entrancing thought,
So rapt the conversation, and so free, —
My heart lost soundings, tenderly upcaught,
Driven by soft sails of love and ecstasy!
Was I then? was I? clasped in Love's embrace,
And touched with ardors of divinity?
Spake with my chosen lover face to face,
Espoused then truly? such my destiny?
I cannot tell; but own the pleasing theft,
That when the stranger went, I was of Love bereft.

" Though the bias of her nature was not to thought but to sympathy, yet was she so perfect in her own nature, as to meet intellectual persons by the fulness of her heart, warming them by her sentiments; believing, as she did, that, by dealing nobly with all, all would show themselves noble."

III.

NOT all the brilliant beauties I have seen,
Mid the gay splendors of some Southern hall,
In jewelled grandeur, or in plainest mien,
Did so my fancy and my heart enthral,
As doth this noble woman, Nature's queen!
Such hearty greeting from her lips did fall,
And I ennobled was through her esteem;
At once made sharer of her confidence,
As by enchantment of some rapturous dream;
With subtler vision gifted, finer sense,
She loosed my tongue's refraining diffidence,
And softer accents lent our varying theme:
So much my Lady others doth surpass,
I read them all through her transparent glass.

"They love indeed who quake to say they love."

SIR PHILIP SIDNEY.

IV.

THE April rains are past, the frosts austere,—
The flowers are hungering for the genial sun,
The snow 's dissolved, the merry birds are here,
And rural labors now are well begun.
Hither, from the disturbing, noisy Court
I 've flown to this sequestered, quiet scene,
To meditate on Love and Love's disport
Mid these smooth pastures and the meadows green.
Sure 't were no fault of mine, no whispering sin,
If these coy leaves he sends me seem to speak
All that my heart, caressing, folds within;
Nor if I sought to smother, my flushed cheek
Would tell too plainly what I cannot hide,
Fond fancy disenchant nor set aside.

"Love is the life of friendship, letters are
The life of love, the loadstones that by rare
Attraction make souls meet, and melt, and mix,
As when by fire exalted gold we fix."

HOWEL.

V.

MOST precious leaves the mail delights to bring,
All loving parcels, neatly squared and sealed;
Her buoyant fancy trims its glossy wing,
And flits courageous o'er Love's flowery field.
Sure 't is a tender and a sparkling flame
That letters kindle and do sweetly feed;
Wilt fly, schoolmaster, for such noble game?
Maiden that doth all other maids exceed!
She writes with passion, and a nimble wit,
Void of all pedantry and vain pretence,
With native genius forcible and fit,
A flowing humor and surpassing sense:
Who gains her heart will win a precious prize,
And fortunate be in every lover's eyes.

"This place may seem for lovers' leisure made,
So close those elms inweave their lofty shade.
The twining woodbine, how it climbs to breathe
Refreshing sweets around us; all beneath,
The ground with grass of cheerful green bespread,
Through which the springing flower uprears its head.
Lo, here are kingcups of a golden hue,
Medleyed with daisies white and endive blue,
And honeysuckles of a purple dye:
Confusion gay! bright waving to the eye."

AMBROSE PHILLIPS.

VI.

'T IS but a half-hour's walk the Mill-Dam o'er,
Past Punch Bowl Inn, where, by the turnpike's side,
The shaded pathway winding to the door,
The mansion rises in ancestral pride: —
Its shaven lawn, and blossoming orchard hoar,
And trellised vines, and hedges trim and neat,
Show plenty and refinement here abide, —
The generous gentleman's fair country-seat.
Now, whilst the full moon glances soft and bright
O'er Mall and Mill-Dam and suburban street,
Turn hitherward thine unaccustomed feet,
At afternoon, or evening, or late night;
A change of scene oft rare attraction lends
To new acquaintance, as to older friends.

"If I may trust the flattering truth of sleep,
My dreams presage some joyful news at hand:
My bosom's lord sits lightly in his throne,
And all this day an unaccustomed spirit
Lifts me above the ground with cheerful thoughts."

SHAKESPEARE.

VII.

THE morning 's clear, the sky without a frown,
The dew-bespangled pastures wet the shoe;
Sauntering full early toward the sleeping town,
We 'll take the dry, well-trodden avenue;
On these crisp pathways, and familiar grounds
(Unless my flattering heart be over-bold),
While lingering purposely amid our rounds,
Some shady lane may love to hear all told.
One name has captured his too partial ear, —
(These kind, concealing bushes love invite
No tell-tales are, nor neighbors impolite;)
I 'll hear his suit devoid of blame or fear.
Impatiently the moment I await;
Who nothing ventures, stays disconsolate.

" Who knows thy destiny? when thou hast done,
Perchance her cabinet may harbor thee,
Whither all noble ambitious wits do run,
A nest almost as full of good as she.
Mark if to get thee she o'erskip the rest,
Mark if she read thee thrice, and kiss the name,
Mark if she do the same that they protest,
Mark if she mark whither her woman came."

DONNE.

VIII.

MEAN are all titles of nobility,
And kings poor spendthrifts, while I do compare
The wealth she daily lavishes on me
Of love, the noble kingdom that I share:
Is it the jealous year, for emphasis,
Sheds beauteous sunshine and refreshing dews?
My maiden's month doth softlier court and kiss,
Tint springtime's virgin cheek with rosier hues
Fly faster o'er my page, impassioned quill,
Signing this note of mine with tenderer touch!
Say I no measure find to mete my will,
Say that I love, but cannot tell how much;
Let time and trouble the full story tell:
I cannot love thee more, I know I love thee well.

"Let raptured fancy on that moment dwell
When thy dear vows in trembling accents fell,
When love acknowledged waked the tender sigh,
Swelled thy full breast, and filled the melting eye."

LANGHORNE.

IX.

NOW I no longer wait my love to tell,
As 'twere a weakness love should not commit;
E'en did avowal my fond hope dispel,
My passion would of weakness me acquit.
Enamoured thus and holden by its spell,
Evasive words disloyal were, unfit
To emphasize the exquisite happiness
My boldest accents falteringly express;
Here, take my hand, and, life-long wedded, lead
Me by thy side; and, with my hand, my heart
Given thee long since in thought, given now in deed;
My life, my love, shall play no faithless part.
Blest be that hour, when, meeting face to face,
Our vows are plighted, ours the dear embrace!

"Venus, thy eternal sway
All the race of men obey."

EURIPIDES.

X.

UNCONQUERABLE and inviolate
Is Love; servant and sov'reign of man's wit:
Though the light-wingèd fancy changeful flit,
She rules unswervingly her fair estate,
O'erbears mischance and error, envy and hate;
High intellect, ambition, passion, pride,
Endowments that capricious Fortune brings,
By her disfranchisements are set aside;
The mistress she alike of slaves and kings,
Empress of Earth's dominions, far and wide,
Eldest of potentates, and latest born.
Of all in Heaven above or Earth below,
No being so illustrious or forlorn,
That to Love's sceptre doth not gladly bow.

" Ye tradeful merchants ! that with weary toil
Do seek most precious things to make your gain,
And both the Indies of their treasure spoil,
What needeth you to seek so far in vain?
For, lo ! my love doth in herself contain
All this world's riches that may far be found;
. . . . . .
But that which fairest is, but few behold,
Her mind adorned with virtues manifold."

SPENSER.

XI.

ANCESTRAL tendencies far down descend;
They bless or blame for generations long;
They prick us forward toward our destined end,
Alike the weak, the sluggish, and the strong.
When her grave ancestor, of Winthrop's date,
Did with the rich mint-master's daughter join
In wedlock, he, sagacious magistrate,
Gained more in sterling worth than silver coin:
So, when King's Chapel saw, in gladsome May,
The mild schoolmaster lead his willing bride,
And the courtly warden give her hand away,
Mintage of like worth had no land beside.
True love alone nobility doth outvie,
And character's the sterling currency.

"How still the sea! behold, how calm the sky!
And how, in sportive chase, the swallows fly!
Sweet breathe the fields, and now a gentle breeze
Moves every leaf and trembles through the trees."

PHILLIPS.

XII.

HITHER, the gray and shapely church beside,
At sandy Hingham, by the sounding sea,
From the disturbing town escaped thus wide,
I'm come, from all encumbering care set free,
To raise the choral song, with friends discourse,
Roam the wide fields for flowers, or seaward sail,
Or to Cohasset's strand repair, where hoarse
Tumultuous surges chant their ceaseless tale;
Or poesy entertain, grave Wordsworth's lays,
Melodious musing childhood's glorious prime,
Shakespeare's warm sonnets or Venetian plays,
Or that sad wizard Mariner's marvellous Rime.
Here in these haunts, this lovers' company,
Sweet Love's symposium hold we happily.

"Books have always a secret influence on the understanding: we cannot at pleasure obliterate ideas; he that reads books of science, though without any desire for improvement, will grow more knowing; he that entertains himself with moral or religious treatises will imperceptibly advance to goodness; the ideas which are often offered to the mind will at last find a lucky moment when it is disposed to receive them."

DR. JOHNSON.

XIII.

My Lady reads, with judgment and good taste,
Books not too many, but the wisest, best,
Pregnant with sentiment sincere and chaste,
Rightly conceived were they and aptly dressed:
These wells of learning tastes she at the source, —
Johnson's poised periods, Fénelon's deep sense,
Taylor's mellifluous and sage discourse,
Majestic Milton's epic eloquence, —
Nor these alone her thoughts do all engage,
But classic authors of the modern time,
And the great masters of the ancient age,
In prose alike and of the lofty rhyme:
Montaigne and Cowper, Plutarch's gallery,
Blind Homer's Iliad and his Odyssey.

" Ye blessed creatures, I have heard the call
Ye to each other make: I see
The heavens laugh with you in your jubilee;
My heart is at your festival,
My head hath its coronal,
The fulness of your bliss I feel — I feel it all."

WORDSWORTH.

XIV.

NOT Wordsworth's genius, Pestalozzi's love,
The stream have sounded of clear infancy.
Baptismal waters from the Head above
These babes I foster daily are to me;
I dip my pitcher in these living springs
And draw, from depths below, sincerity;
Unsealed, mine eyes behold all outward things
Arrayed in splendors of divinity.
What mount of vision can with mine compare?
Not Roman Jove nor yet Olympian Zeus
Darted from loftier ether through bright air
One spark of holier fire for human use.
Glad tidings thence these angels downward bring,
As at their birth the heavenly choirs do sing.

"*Fresh as the morning, earnest as the hour*
That calls the noisy world to grateful sleep,
Our silent thought reveres the nameless power
That high seclusion round thy life doth keep."

SANBORN.

XV.

DAUGHTER, beloved of all, thy tender eye,
Sweet disposition, and thy gentle voice,
Make every heart, full soon thy close ally,
Respect thy wishes, thine unspoken choice, —
Hastening, unbidden, therewith to comply;
They in thy cheerful countenance rejoice,
Kindness unfailing, and quick sympathy.
Peacemaker thou, with equanimity
And aspirations far above thy care,
Leavest no duty slighted or undone,
Living for thy dear kindred, always there,
Faithful as rising and as setting sun.
Can I of lovelier mansion be possest,
Than in thy heart to dwell a welcome guest?

"Stern daughter of the voice of God!
O Duty, if that name thou love,
Who art a light to guide, a rod
To check the erring, and reprove;
Thou who art victory and law,
When empty terrors overawe;
And calm'st the weary strife of frail humanity!"

WORDSWORTH.

XVI.

WHEN I remember with what buoyant heart,
Midst war 's alarms and woes of civil strife,
In youthful eagerness, thou didst depart,
At peril of thy safety, peace, and life,
To nurse the wounded soldier, swathe the dead—
How piercèd soon by fever's poisoned dart,
And brought unconscious home, with wildered head—
Thou, ever since, mid languor and dull pain,
To conquer fortune, cherish kindred dear,
Hast with grave studies vexed a sprightly brain,
In myriad households kindled love and cheer;
Ne'er from thyself by Fame's loud trump beguiled,
Sounding in this and the farther hemisphere:—
I press thee to my heart, as Duty's faithful child.

"In deepest passions of my grief-swoll'n breast,
Sweet soul, this only comfort seizeth me,
That so few years should make thee so much blest,
And give such wings to reach eternity."

BROWN'S SHEPHERD'S PIPE.

XVII.

'T WAS not permitted thee the Fates to please,
And with survivors share our happier day;
For smitten early wast thou by disease,
Whilst with thy sisters thou didst smile and play.
Wasted by pains and lingering decay,
Life's glowing currents at the source did freeze;
Yet, ere the angel summoned thee away,
Above thy cheerful couch affection's ray
Did brightly shine, and all thy sufferings ease.
Dear child of grace! so patient and so strong,
Bound to thy duty by quick sympathy,
They did our hearts irreparable wrong
To break the promise of thy infancy;
Ah me! life is not life, deprived of thee.

" Will't ne'er be morning? will that promised light
Ne'er break, and clear these clouds of night?
Sweet Phosphor, bring the day,
Whose conquering ray
May chase these fogs: sweet Phosphor, bring the day."

QUARLES.

XVIII.

LOVE'S MORROW.

I.

It was but yesterday
That all was bright and fair:
Came over the sea,
So merrily,
News from my darling there.
Now over the sea
Comes hither to me
Knell of despair, —
"No more, no longer there!"

II.

Ah! gentle May,
Couldst thou not stay?

Why hurriedst thou so swift away?
No — not the same —
Nor can it be —
That lovely name —
Ever again what once it was to me.
It cannot, cannot be
That lovely name to me.

III.

I cannot think her dead,
So lately, sweetly wed;
She who had tasted bliss,
A mother's virgin kiss,
Rich gifts conferred to bless
With costliest happiness,
Nobility and grace
To ornament her place.

IV.

Broken the golden band,
Severed the silken strand,
Ye sisters four!
Still to me two remain,
And two have gone before:
Our loss, her gain,—
And He who gave can all restore.
And yet—Oh! why,
My heart doth cry,
Why take her thus away?

V.

I wake in tears and sorrow:
Wearily I say,
"Come, come, fair morrow,
And chase my grief away!"
Night-long I say,

"Haste, haste, fair morrow,
And bear my grief away!"
All night long,
My sad, sad song.

VI.

"Comes not the welcome morrow,"
My boding heart doth say;
Still grief from grief doth borrow;
"My child is far away."
Still as I pray
The deeper swells my sorrow.
Break, break! The risen day
Takes not my grief away.

VII.

Full well I know,
Joy's spring is fathomless, —
Its fountains overflow
To cheer and bless,

And underneath our grief
Well forth and give relief.
Transported May!
Thou couldst not stay;
Who gave, took thee away.
Come, child, and whisper peace to me,
Say, must I wait, or come to thee?
I list to hear
Thy message clear.

VIII.

"Cease, cease, new grief to borrow!"
Last night I heard her say;
"For sorrow hath no morrow,
'T is born of yesterday.
Translated thou shalt be,
My cloudless daylight see,
And bathe, as I, in fairest morrows endlessly."

"Shall not from these remains,
From this low mound, dear ashes of the dead,
The violet spring?"

PERSIUS.

XIX.

O DEATH! thou utterest deeper speech,
A tenderer, truer tone,
Than all our languages can reach,
Though all were voiced in one.

Thy glance is deep, and, far beyond
All that our eyes do see,
Assures to fairest hopes and fond
Their immortality.

Sing, sing, the Immortals,
The Ancients of days,
Ever crowding the portals
Of Time's peopled ways;
These Babes ever stealing
Into Eden's glad feeling,
The fore-world revealing,
God's face ne'er concealing.

XX.

VOYAGER across the seas,
In my arms thy form I press;
Come, my Baby, me to please,
Blue-eyed nurseling, motherless!

All is strange and beautiful,
Every sense finds glad surprise,
Life is lovely, wonderful,
Faces fair, and beaming eyes.

Safe, ye angels, keep this child,
Life-long guard her innocence,
Winsome ways, and temper mild;
Heaven, our home, be her defence!

" O, how thy worth with manners may I sing,
When thou art all the better part of me?
What can mine own praise to mine own self bring?
And what is't but mine own when I praise thee?"

SHAKESPEARE.

XXI.

DEAR Heart! if aught to human love I've owed
For noble furtherance of the good and fair;
Climbed I, by bold emprise, the dizzying stair
To excellence, and was by thee approved,
In memory cherished and the more beloved;
If fortune smiled, and late-won liberty,—
'T was thy kind favor all, thy generous legacy.
Nor didst thou spare thy large munificence
Me here to pleasure amply and maintain,
But conjured from suspicion and mischance,
Exile, misapprehension, cold disdain,
For my loved cloud-rapt dream, supremacy;
To bright reality transformed romance,
Crowning with smiles the hard-earned victory.

"The hills were reared, the valleys scooped in vain,
If Learning's altars vanish from the plain."

CHANNING.

XXII.

CALM vale of comfort, peace, and industry,
Well doth thy name thy homebred traits express! —
Considerate people, neighborly and free,
Proud of their monuments, their ancestry,
Their circling river's quiet loveliness,
Their noble townsmen's fame and history.
Nor less I glory in each goodly trait,
Child of another creed, a stricter State;
I chose thee for my haunt in troublous time,
My home in days of late prosperity,
And laud thee now in this familiar rhyme;
Here on thy bosom the last summons wait
To scenes, if lovelier, still reflecting thee,
Resplendent both in hope and memory.

PART II.

SONNETS.

"In sundry moods, 't was pastime to be bound
Within the sonnet's scanty plot of ground."

WORDSWORTH.

"I like that friendship which, by soft gentle pauses, steals upon the affections and grows mellow with time, by reciprocal offices and trials of love; that friendship is like to last long, and never shrink in the wetting."

HOWEL.

I.

In Youth's glad morning, when the rising East
Glows golden with assurance of success,
And life itself 's a rare continual feast,
Enjoyed the more if meditated less,
'T is then that friendship's pleasures chiefly bless,
As if without beginning, — ne'er to end, —
So rich the season and so dear the friend,
When thou and I went wandering hand in hand;
Mine wert thou in our years of earliest prime,
Studious at home, or to the southern land
Adventuring bold; again in later time,
Thy kindly service, always at command
Of calm discretion, and abounding sense,
Prompted and showed the path to excellence.

"Power above powers! O heavenly eloquence!
That, with the strong rein of commanding words,
Dost manage, guide, and master the eminence
Of man's affections more than all their swords;
Shall we not offer to thy excellence
The richest treasure that our wit affords?
Or should we careless come behind the rest
In power of words that go before in worth;
When all that ever hotter spirits exprest
Comes bettered by the patience of the North?"

DANIEL.

II.

My thought revives at utterance of thy name,—
Doth high behavior, sweet discourse recall,
Lit with emotion's quick and quenchless flame,
Imagination interfused through all;
Then peals thy voice melodious on mine ear,
As when grave anthems thou didst well recite,—
Laodamia's vision sad and dear,
Or "Thanatopsis," or "Hail, Holy Light!"
Thou true Professor, gifted to dispense
New pathos e'en to Channing's eloquence;
If mother tongue they fail to speak or write,
Nor Greek nor Latin draw thy pupils thence;
Such culture, taught by the far Northern sea,
This scholar brings, New England, home to thee.

"*Ascending soul, sing Pæan.*"

ORACLE.

III.

CHRISTIAN beloved! devoid of art and wile,—
Who lovest thy Lord so well, with heart so true,
That neither mist nor mote of worldly guile
May clog thy vision, nor confuse the view
Of that transcendent and commanding style
Of god-like manhood; which had dazed long while
Each purblind brother's idol-loving eye.
Sense overpowering doth the soul belie:
Thou the soul's errand and due place dost see,
Its heavenly features to thy ken disclose,
As when in Nazareth thy Lord uprose,
The Father's image in Humanity.
A holy service thine, interpreter
Of Lazarus rising from the sepulchre.

" The virtuous mind that ever walks attended

By a strong siding champion, Conscience."

MILTON.

IV.

CHANNING! my Mentor whilst my thought was young,
And I the votary of fair liberty, —
How hung I then upon thy glowing tongue,
And thought of love and truth as one with thee!
Thou wast the inspirer of a nobler life,
When I with error waged unequal strife,
And from its coils thy teaching set me free.
Be ye, his followers, to his leading true,
Nor privilege covet, nor the wider sway;
But hold right onward in his loftier way,
As best becomes, and is his rightful due.
If learning 's yours, — gifts God doth least esteem, —
Beyond all gifts was his transcendent view;
O realize his Pentecostal dream!

"Without oblivion there is no remembrance possible. When both oblivion and memory are wise, then the general soul is clear, melodious, and true."

CARLYLE.

V.

DAUGHTER of Memory! who her watch doth keep
O'er dark Oblivion's land of shade and dream,
Peers down into the realm of ancient Sleep,
Where Thought uprises with a sudden gleam
And lights the devious path 'twixt *Be* and *Seem;*
Mythologist! that dost thy legend steep
Plenteously with opiate and anodyne,
Inweaving fact with fable, line with line,
Entangling anecdote and episode,
Mindful of all that all men meant or said, —
We follow, pleased, thy labyrinthine road,
By Ariadne's skein and lesson led:
For thou hast wrought so excellently well,
Thou drop'st more casual truth than sages tell.

"Not on the store of sprightly wine,
Nor plenty of delicious meats,
Though gracious Nature did design
To court us with perpetual treats;
'Tis not on these we for content depend,
So much as on the shadow of a friend."

MENANDER.

VI.

MISFORTUNE to have lived not knowing thee!
'T were not high living, nor to noblest end,
Who, dwelling near, learned not sincerity,
Rich friendship's ornament that still doth lend
To life its consequence and propriety.
Thy fellowship was my culture, noble friend:
By the hand thou took'st me, and did'st condescend
To bring me straightway into thy fair guild;
And life-long hath it been high compliment
By that to have been known, and thy friend styled,
Given to rare thought and to good learning bent;
Whilst in my straits an angel on me smiled.
Permit me, then, thus honored, still to be
A scholar in thy university.

"He shall not seek to weave,
In weak, unhappy times,
Efficacious rhymes;
Wait his returning strength.
Bird, that from the nadir's floor
To the zenith's top can soar,
The soaring orbit of the Muse exceeds that
journey's length."

VII.

HIEROPHANT, and lyrist of the soul!
Clear insight thine of universal mind;
While from its crypts the nascent Powers unrol,
And represent to consciousness the Whole.
Each in its order seeks its natural kind,
These latent or apparent, stir or sleep,
Watchful o'er widening fields of airy space,
Or slumbering sightless in the briny deep; —
Thou, far above their shows, servant of Grace,
Tread'st the bright way from SPIRIT down to Sense,
Interpreting all symbols to thy race, —
Commanding vistas of the fair Immense,
And glimpses upward far, where, sons of Heaven,
Sit in Pantheon throned the Sacred Seven.

"The princely mind, that can
Teach man to keep a God in man,—
And when wise poets would search out to see
Good men, behold them all in thee!"

VIII.

PLEASED, I recall those hours, so fair and free,
When all the long forenoons we two did toss
From lip to lip, in lively colloquy,
Plato, Plotinus, or famed schoolman's gloss,
Disporting in rapt thought and ecstasy.
Then by the tilting rail Millbrook we cross,
And sally through the fields to Walden wave,
Plunging within the cove, or swimming o'er;
Through woodpaths wending, he with gesture quick
Rhymes deftly in mid-air with circling stick,
Skims the smooth pebbles from the leafy shore,
Or deeper ripples raises as we lave;
Nor slumb'rous pillow touches at late night,
Till converse with the stars his eyes invite.

" Queen and huntress, chaste and fair,
Now the sun is laid to sleep;
Seated in thy silver chair,
State in wonted manner keep:
Hesperus entreats thy light,
Goddess excellently bright.

" Lay thy bow of pearl apart,
And thy crystal shining quiver;
Give unto the flying hart
Space to breathe, how short soever,
Thou who mak'st a day of night,
Goddess excellently bright."

BEN JONSON.

IX.

DEAR Lady! oft I meditate on thee,
Noblest companion and fit peer of him
Whom envious years, in high prosperity,
Could blemish least, nor aught the lustre dim
Of that fair-fashioned native piety
Embosomed in the soul that smiles on Fate,
And held by him and thee inviolate, —
Fountain of youth, still sparkling o'er the brim.
Then I recall thy salient quick wit,
Its arrowy quiver and its supple bow, —
Huntress of wrong! right well thy arrows hit,
Though from the wound thou see'st the red drops flow:
I much admire that dexterous archery,
And pray that sinners may thy target be.

" *Upon the nineteenth day of the first month, they keep a solemn festival to Hermes, wherein they eat honey and figs, and withal, say these words,* 'Truth is a sweet thing;' *and that amulet or charm which they fable to hang about her is, when interpreted in our language,* 'A true voice.' "

PLUTARCH.

X.

THOU, Sibyl rapt! whose sympathetic soul
Infused the myst'ries thy tongue failed to tell;
Though from thy lips the marvellous accents fell,
And weird wise meanings o'er the senses stole,
Through those rare cadences, with winsome spell;
Yet, even in such refrainings of thy voice,
There struggled up a wailing undertone,
That spoke thee victim of the Sisters' choice,—
Charming all others, dwelling still alone.
They left thee thus disconsolate to roam,
And scorned thy dear, devoted life to spare.
Around the storm-tost vessel sinking there
The wild waves chant thy dirge and welcome home;
Survives alone thy sex's valiant plea,
And the great heart that loved the brave and free.

"One knocked at the Beloved's door, and a Voice asked from within, Who is there? And he answered, It is I. Then the Voice said, This house will not hold me and thee, and the door was not opened. Then went the Lover into the desert, and fasted and prayed in solitude. And after a year he returned, and knocked again at the door. And again the Voice asked, Who is there? and he said, It is Thyself. And the door was opened to him."

PERSIAN POET.

XI.

PRIEST of the gladsome tidings, old and new,
To whom by nature fell, as the most fit,
The saintly Channing's mantle; brave and true,
Thou heedst thy calling, and dost well acquit
Thyself of the high mission. Thy sage wit
(O brother in the Lord, and well approved
To lead men heavenward to the Father's throne,
And Son's that sits at His right hand beloved!)
Hath ministered to every clime and zone
Washed by Pacific or Atlantic sea,
With chainless flow 'neath Heaven's unbounded cope.
Son of the Church, saint of thy century!
Undoubting faith is thine, and fadeless hope,
And ardent, all-embracing charity.

"Philosophy does not look into pedigrees. She did not receive Plato as noble, but she made him such."

SENECA.

XII.

INTERPRETER of the Pure Reason's laws,
And all the obligations Thought doth owe
These high ambassadors of her great cause;
Philosopher! whose rare discernments show
Apt mastery of her surpassing skill,
And why each thought and thing is inly so
Conceived and fashioned in the plastic Will;
Thou Reason's canons dost so well maintain,
With such adhesive and sincere regard,
That every deviator seeks in vain
To escape thy apprehension; evil-starred,
With Dante's sophisters they writhe in pain.
Then from thy judgment-seat, dismissed with ruth,
Thou lead'st the stumblers in the way of truth.

"Hast thou named all the birds without a gun?
Loved the wild rose and left it on its stalk?
At rich men's tables eaten bread and pulse?
Unarmed, faced danger with a heart of trust?
And loved so well a high behavior,
In man or maid, that thou from speech refrained,
Nobility more nobly to repay?
Oh, be my friend, and teach me to be thine!"

EMERSON.

XIII.

WHO nearer Nature's life would truly come
Must nearest come to him of whom I speak;
He all kinds knew, — the vocal and the dumb;
Masterful in genius was he, and unique,
Patient, sagacious, tender, frolicsome.
This Concord Pan would oft his whistle take,
And forth from wood and fen, field, hill, and lake,
Trooping around him, in their several guise,
The shy inhabitants their haunts forsake:
Then he, like Esop, man would satirize,
Hold up the image wild to clearest view
Of undiscerning manhood's puzzled eyes,
And mocking say, "Lo! mirrors here for you:
Be true as these, if ye would be more wise."

"*The happy man who lived content*
With his own town and continent,
Whose chiding stream its banks did curb
As ocean circumscribes its orb,
Round which, when he his walks did take,
Thought he performed far more than Drake:
For other lands he took less thought,
Than this his Muse and landscape brought."

EVELYN.

XIV.

MUCH do they wrong our Henry, wise and kind,
Morose who name thee, cynical to men,
Forsaking manners civil and refined
To build thyself in Walden woods a den, —
Then flout society, flatter the rude hind.
We better knew thee, loyal citizen!
Thou, friendship's all-adventuring pioneer,
Civility itself didst civilize:
Whilst braggart boors, wavering 'twixt rage and fear,
Slave hearths lay waste, and Indian huts surprise,
And swift the Martyr's gibbet would uprear:
Thou hail'dst him great whose valorous emprise
Orion's blazing belt dimmed in the sky, —
Then bowed thy unrepining head to die.

"*Happy art thou whom God doth bless*
With the full choice of thine own happiness;
And happier yet, because thou'rt blest
With prudence how to choose the best:
In books and gardens thou hast placed aright—
Things well which thou dost understand,
And both dost make with thy laborious hand—
Thy noble, innocent delight.

. . . . . .

Methinks I see great Diocletian walk
In the Salonian garden's noble shade,
Which by his own imperial hands was made;
I see him smile, methinks, as he does talk
With the ambassadors, who come in vain
To entice him to a throne again."

COWLEY'S ODE TO EVELYN.

XV.

WHILST from the cloistered schools rushed forth in view
The eager Bachelors, on lucre bent,
Or life voluptuous; even the studious few,
Oblivious mostly, if they ever knew
What Nature mirrored and fair learning meant;
Thou, better taught, on worthier aims intent,
Short distance from the Pilgrims' sea-washed street
Thine orchard planted; grove and garden there,
And sheltering coppice hide thy mansion neat,
By winding alley reached, and gay parterre;
Where cordial welcome chosen friends shall meet,
From courteous host and graceful lady fair;
Then thy choice fruits we taste, thy wisdom hived,
England's rare Evelyn in thee revived.

"Thou art not gone, being gone, — where'er thou art,
Thou leav'st in him thy watchful eyes, in him thy loving heart."

DONNE.

XVI.

BRIGHT visions of my sprightlier youthful days,
With sunny gleams of answering friendliness,
Thou brought'st me, maiden, in delightful ways,
In conversation, letters, frank address;
And these attractions did me so possess,
The moments all were thine, and thou in sight
By day's engagements, and in dreams by night.
Wished I the spell dissolved, or ever less?
Ne'er may advancing years remove one tint
From memory's tablet of that happy time;
And if thus tamely that romance I hint,
Forgive my poor endeavor in this rhyme,
Nor warrant give me now, my cherished friend,
To add the more, lest I the more offend.

Ἀστὴρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν ἑῷος,
Νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἔσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.

"*Thou wert a morning star among the living*
Ere thy fair light had fled;
Now, being gone, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New lustre to the dead."

PLATO.

XVII.

SWEET saint! whose rising dawned upon the sight
Like fair Aurora chasing mists away;
Our ocean billows, and thy western height
Gave back reflections of the tender ray,
Sparkling and smiling as night turned to day: —
Ah! whither vanished that celestial light?
Suns rise and set, Monadnoc's amethyst
Year-long above the sullen cloud appears,
Daily the waves our summer strand have kissed,
But thou returnest not with days and years:
Or is it thine, yon clear and beckoning star,
Seen o'er the hills that guarded once thy home?
Dost guide thy friend's free steps that widely roam
Toward that far country where his wishes are?

"Thus sing I to cragg'd clifts and hills,
To sighing winds, to murmuring rills,
To wasteful woods, to empty groves,
Such things as my dear mind most loves."

HENRY MORE.

XVIII.

ADVENTUROUS mariner! in whose gray skiff,
Dashing disastrous o'er the fretful wave,
The steersman, subject to each breeze's whiff,
Or blast capricious that o'er seas doth rave,
Scarce turns his rudder from the fatal cliff, —
Scorning his craft or e'en himself to save.
Ye Powers of air, that shift the seaman's grave,
Adjust the tackle of his right intent,
And bring him safely to the port he meant!
Long musing there on that divinity
Who to his hazard had assistance lent,
He verses cons, oft taken by surprise
In diverse meanings, and shrewd subtlety,
That pass quaint Donne, and even Shakespeare wise.

"But else, in deep of night, when drowsiness
Hath locked up mortal sense, then listen I
To the celestial Syrens' harmony
That sit upon the nine infolded spheres,
And sing to those that hold the vital shears,
And turn the adamantine spindle round,
On which the fate of gods and men is wound."

MILTON.

XIX.

ROMANCER, far more coy than that coy sex!
Perchance some stroke of magic thee befell,
Ere thy baronial keep the Muse did vex,
Nor grant deliverance from enchanted spell,
But tease thee all the while and sore perplex,
Till thou that wizard tale shouldst fairly tell,
Better than poets in thy own clear prose.
Painter of sin in its deep scarlet dyes,
Thy doomsday pencil Justice doth expose,
Hearing and judging at the dread assize;
New England's guilt blazoning before all eyes,
No other chronicler than thee she chose.
Magician deathless! dost thou vigil keep,
Whilst 'neath our pines thou feignest deathlike sleep?

"There is a Roman splendor in her smile,
A tenderness that owes its depth to toil;
Well may she leave the soft voluptuous wile,
That forms the woman of a softer soil;
She does pour forth herself, a fragrant oil,
Upon the dark asperities of Fate,
And make a garden else all desolate."

ELLERY CHANNING.

XX.

STILL held in sweet remembrance thou, my friend,
As when I knew thee in thy maiden prime;
Though later years to ripening graces lend
The graver traits, whilst we together climb
The pathway upward to those loftier heights,
'Bove clouded prospects and familiar sights.
Thy gracious worth shines brightly in mine eyes,
Thy warm heart's labors, thy large liberal brain,
Ennobling studies, and broad charities,
Thou woman worthy of the coming age!
Whilst household duties thou dost well sustain,
Yet ampler service for thy sex presage;
Can aught from Memory's record e'er erase
Thy cordial manners, and resplendent face?

"*So have I seen in fair Castile,*
The youth in glittering squadrons start,
Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
And hurl the unexpected dart."

SCOTT.

XXI.

POET of the Pulpit, whose full-chorded lyre
Startles the churches from their slumbers late,
Discoursing music, mixed with lofty ire,
At wrangling factions in the restless state,
Till tingles with thy note each listening ear,—
Then household charities by the friendly fire
Of home, soothe all to fellowship and good cheer.
No sin escapes thy fervent eloquence,
Yet, touching with compassion the true word,
Thou leavest the trembling culprit's dark offence
To the mediation of his gracious Lord.
To noble thought and deep dost thou dispense
Due meed of praise, strict in thy just award.
Can other pulpits with this preacher cope?
I glory in thy genius, and take hope!

"Many are the friends of the golden tongue."

WELSH TRIAD.

XXII.

PEOPLE'S Attorney, servant of the Right!
Pleader for all shades of the solar ray,
Complexions dusky, yellow, red, or white;
Who, in thy country's and thy time's despite,
Hast only questioned, What will Duty say?
And followed swiftly in her narrow way:
Tipped is thy tongue with golden eloquence,
All honeyed accents fall from off thy lips,—
Each eager listener his full measure sips,
Yet runs to waste the sparkling opulence,—
The scorn of bigots, and the worldling's flout.
If Time long held thy merit in suspense,
Hastening repentant now, with pen devout,
Impartial History dare not leave thee out.

" Who faithful in insane sedition keeps,
With silver and with ruddy gold may vie."

TYRTÆUS.

XXIII.

'T WAS when the land was struggling to break free
From Slavery's fetter and provincial ban,
Whilst a great people dreaded liberty, —
That the dire conflict of thine age began.
Thy voice rang clear o'er selfish sect and clan;
Nor politician's, priest's, nor tradesman's plea
Did aught avail to quench, but more to fan
The flame that must consume all slavery, —
The serf then franchised and proclaimed a man.
Long wast thou heard amid the scoff and scorn
Of voices potent in thy city dear;
Steadfast didst face the storm, with heart of cheer,
And prove thyself the freeman nobly born,
Preacher of righteousness, of saints the peer.

" Nothing is here for tears, nothing to wail
Or knock the breast, no weakness, no contempt,
Dispraise or blame, nothing but well and fair,
And what may quiet us in a death so noble."

MILTON.

XXIV.

BOLD Saint, thou firm believer in the Cross,
Again made glorious by self-sacrifice, —
Love's free atonement given without love's loss, —
That martyrdom to thee was lighter pain,
Since thus a race its liberties should gain;
Flash its sure consequence in Slavery's eyes
When, 'scaping sabre's clash and battle's smoke,
She felt the justice of thy master-stroke:
Peaceful prosperity around us lies,
Freedom with loyalty thy valor gave;
Whilst thou, no felon doomed, for gallows fit,
O Patriot true! O Christian meek and brave!
Throned in the martyrs' seat henceforth shalt sit;
Prophet of God! Messias of the Slave!

"O my brethren! I have told
Most bitter truth, but without bitterness,
Nor deem my zeal or factious or mistimed;
For never can true courage dwell with them
Who, playing tricks with conscience, dare not look
At their own vices."

COLERIDGE.

XXV.

NOBLY censorious of our transient age,
Hating oppressors in thy love of man,
Thou didst stride forward on the public stage
With the bold liberators to the van,
Scourging delinquents with a lofty rage.
Iconoclast, who 'gainst foul idols ran,
Tumbling false gods from their wide-worshipped shrine,
To throne therein the human and divine.
Charged was thy soul with vehement eloquence,
Strenuous with ample reason's manly art;
Thy prayers were fervent, void of all pretence,
Wrath yielded place to pity in thy heart;
Eagerly of all learning mad'st thou spoil,
Before thy lamp, extinguished, spent its oil.

" There's not a breathing of the common wind
That will forget thee: thou hast great allies;
Thy friends are exultations, agonies,
And love, and man's unconquerable mind."

WORDSWORTH.

XXVI.

FREEDOM'S first champion in our fettered land!
Nor politician nor base citizen
Could gibbet thee, nor silence, nor withstand.
Thy trenchant and emancipating pen
The patriot Lincoln snatched with steady hand,
Writing his name and thine on parchment white,
Midst war's resistless and ensanguined flood;
Then held that proclamation high in sight
Before his fratricidal countrymen, —
"Freedom henceforth throughout the land for all," —
And sealed the instrument with his own blood,
Bowing his mighty strength for slavery's fall;
Whilst thou, stanch friend of largest liberty,
Survived, — its ruin and our peace to see.

"E venni dal martirio a questa pace."

DANTE.

"Ah, me! how dark the discipline of pain,
Were not the suffering followed by the sense
Of infinite rest and infinite release!
This is our consolation; and again
A great soul cries to us in our suspense:
'I came from martyrdom unto this peace.'"

LONGFELLOW.

XXVII.

I.

O THOU, my country, ope thine eyes
Toward what the Future holds for thee!
  See the brave stripling rise
  From lowliest hut and poverty,
    From stair to stair;
Nor hardly fix his footsteps there,
    Ere he another round
    Doth upward bound;
Still, step by step, to higher stair
    Forward he leaps,
Broader his vision sweeps,
Till he the loftiest summit gain,—
A people's hope to further and maintain.

II.

But lo! as oft befalls the great,
The wise and good,
There for a moment poised he stood, —
Then passed beyond the gazing crowd
Within the folded cloud.
Wasted by weary pains,
His pale remains
Now lie in state,
Swathed in his bloody shroud;
Peoples and kingdoms bathed in tears.
Hear'st thou the welcome greet his ears,
As he his holier throne doth take?
This brave of fifty manly years,
Dies he not now for thy dear sake?

III.

O follow, thou, his leading far,
Be thou thyself the morning star,
Beaming thy glories round the world,
His name emblazoned on thy flag unfurled!
What speak the myriad bells,
Tolling this day their mournful knells?
"Ne'er may our weight be swung,
Never our iron tongue
Slavery's base might extol
In town or capitol;
But o'er a people brave and free
Ring out in happier symphony
Garfield and Liberty!"

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